

**Submissions from applicants should be sufficient to enable the participating agencies to determine whether or not a proposed Promise Zone meets the qualifying criteria, and score the application according to the selection criteria listed below.**

## **LEAD APPLICANT**

Due to the nature of the initiative, Promise Zone activities are likely to be carried out by a variety of organizations and organization types, including government entities, nonprofit organizations and for-profit organizations. Eligible lead applicants for Promise Zone designations include:

1. Local or tribal governments (which includes county, city, town, township, parish, village, governmental authority or other general-purpose political subdivision of a state or tribe or any combination thereof)
2. Non-profit organizations or tribal housing authority applying in partnership with local or tribal government

The application must include information allowing the agencies to clearly identify the lead applicant, email, and telephone number of the designated official of that entity.

## **QUALIFYING CRITERIA**

### Rural Qualifying Criteria

All of the following must be present for a proposed Promise Zone to be designated:

1. Promise Zones must encompass multiple census tracts across a contiguous geography and must include one or more non-metro counties; but do not need to include an entire county or counties.
2. The overall poverty rate within the Promise Zone must be over 20 percent.
3. The Promise Zone must contain at least one census tract with a poverty rate above 30 percent.
4. Promise Zone boundaries must encompass a population of at least 6,000 but no more than 200,000 residents.
5. Proposed boundaries must have significant overlap with the existing boundaries of a Promise Neighborhoods implementation grant, Stronger Economies Together (SET) region, a Rural Jobs Accelerator grant, or Partnership for Sustainable Communities (Rural Planning Grant); and the grantees/partners of those grants must be key applicants/partners for the Promise Zone application.
6. Local leadership of jurisdictions represented in the Promise Zone must demonstrate commitment to the Promise Zone effort.
7. For applications across jurisdictional lines, a clear lead applicant must be identified, and commitment must be demonstrated by leadership of all jurisdictions involved.

Tribal Qualifying Criteria

All of the following must be present for a proposed Promise Zone to be designated:

1. Tribal<sup>1</sup> applicants can define boundaries which can encompass: multiple census tracts and nearby tribally-owned areas; or reservations; or consortia of tribes and non-tribal jurisdictions.
2. The overall poverty rate within the Promise Zone must be over 20 percent.
3. Zone boundaries must encompass a population of no more than 200,000 residents.
4. Proposed boundaries must have significant overlap with the existing boundaries of a Stronger Economies Together (SET) region, a Rural Jobs Accelerator grant, or Partnership for Sustainable Communities (Rural Planning Grant); and the grantees/partners of those grants must be key applicants/partners.
5. Local leadership and tribal leadership of jurisdictions represented in the Promise Zone must demonstrate commitment to the Promise Zone effort.
6. For applications across jurisdictional lines, a clear lead applicant must be identified, and commitment must be demonstrated by leadership of all jurisdictions involved.

**The rest of this document pertains to both Rural and Tribal Applicants.**

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<sup>1</sup> Federally-recognized tribes, Alaska Native Corporations and Alaska Native governments as well as consortia approved by tribal resolution/by-laws or equivalent.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

Points	Factors
5	<p><b>NEED</b></p> <p>The applicant's submission materials must contain sufficient information to verify the following data within the boundaries of the geographic area proposed as a Promise Zone. Points will be awarded for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Higher poverty rate/ELI rate – Concentration of households in poverty or with extremely low incomes (whichever is greater) residing within the Promise Zone;</li> <li>2. Part I serious and violent crime rate – Rate of Part I serious and violent crimes within the Promise Zone over the most recent 10-year period, to the extent data is available; and</li> <li>3. Lower employment rate – Employment rate for working-age adults within the Promise Zone.</li> </ol>
40	<p><b>STRATEGY</b></p> <p>The application must include information sufficient to demonstrate:</p>
10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The applicant's current assessment of the needs and assets of the proposed Promise Zone, including the needs of particular segments of the targeted population and assets of resident population, civic or tribal institutions, existing regional economic growth efforts and industries, crime, private or tribal-owned economic activity, access to capital and other characteristics.</li> </ol>
20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Soundness of the applicant's overall strategy for revitalizing the Promise Zone (and achieving Promise Zone outcomes) such that the Promise Zone offers children the safe, healthy environment they need to succeed, residents with choices of where to live and private actors with incentives to invest within the Promise Zone. In considering ratings under this factor, reviewers will consider items such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Responsiveness of the strategy to the Promise Zone's assets, challenges, and barriers;</li> <li>b. Extent to which the strategy targets and aligns existing local efforts, actors, and investments into the evidence-based Promise Zones strategy;</li> <li>c. Extent to which the strategy aligns with, and leverages, existing evidence-based community or regional efforts related to Promise Zones outcomes;</li> <li>d. Clear rationale with regard to priorities and sequencing within the strategy, including building on existing Promise Neighborhoods implementing grants, Stronger Economies Together (SET), Rural Jobs Accelerator or Sustainable Communities efforts, as appropriate;</li> <li>e. Clear description of the interconnections between interventions across different policy areas (e.g., economic development, housing, education, safety, and health);</li> <li>f. Clear plans to remove barriers and improve systems that impede delivery of services such as changes in policies, technology, and program reporting;</li> <li>g. Plans to manage, share, and use data for evaluation and continuous improvement –</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>particularly where the evidence base for chosen strategies is still emergent;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>h. Extent to which the strategy demonstrates a commitment to improving outcomes for existing residents of the Promise Zone;</li> <li>i. Clarity of definition of outcomes, including whether annual goals are set for 5 years and whether a system is in place for accountability and measurement; and</li> <li>j. Overall likely impact of the strategy's implementation within the Promise Zone.</li> </ul>
5	<p>3. Evidence base supporting the goals of the applicant's overall strategy including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The strategy's likelihood of creating jobs within the Promise Zone;</li> <li>b. The strategy's likelihood of increasing economic activity within the Promise Zone;</li> <li>c. The strategy's likelihood of improving career educational opportunities within the Promise Zone;</li> <li>d. The strategy's likelihood of reducing serious and violent crime or maintaining a low rate of serious and violent crime within the Promise Zone; and</li> <li>e. The strategy's likelihood of achieving other key outcomes necessary for success, including reduction of Promise Zone poverty rate.</li> </ul>
5	<p>4. Sustainability and financial feasibility of the strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Soundness of strategy to build a consortium of partners that promotes sustainability of the Promise Zones strategy, including private, public or tribal partners and stakeholders;</li> <li>b. Leverage of private/non-profit or tribal capital already committed to elements of the strategy;</li> <li>c. Soundness of overall sustainability strategy, including future anticipated sources of funds and planning for contingencies including loss of potential funding or anticipated funding becoming available more slowly than expected.</li> </ul>
<b>55</b>	<p><b>CAPACITY AND LOCAL COMMITMENT</b></p> <p>The application must include information sufficient to demonstrate:</p>
10	<p>1. Soundness of the partnership structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Clarity of roles and responsibilities, including factors such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Identification of project lead;</li> <li>ii. Clarity of partner responsibilities for executing components of Promise Zone strategy, and appropriateness of partners designated for executing each component (e.g., engagement of private employers/small businesses to create jobs and increase economic activity, engagement of educational actors to improve educational opportunities, and engagement of public safety institutions to reduce serious and violent crime);</li> <li>iii. Clarity of partnership governance structure.</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Strength of accountability mechanisms, including oversight processes and contractual</li> </ul>

	measures and remedies for non-performance.
15	<p>2. Capacity of initiative lead – capacity of the organization leading the Promise Zone effort to achieve outcomes through implementation of sophisticated, multi-party, high-impact community or regional revitalization efforts. For a. and b. below, up to 12 points will be based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Degree to which prior experience of the lead organization is similar to, or has prepared the applicant for the scale, scope, and complexity of the proposed Promise Zone effort. In scoring under this factor, the agencies will consider factors including the following, as appropriate to the situation of the proposed Promise Zone its activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Role of current organizational leadership within the prior work;</li> <li>ii. Previous success achieving intended outcomes;</li> <li>iii. Previous success leveraging and managing public or private or tribal capital investments; which can include loan and grant programs offered by various federal, state, and tribal entities, tribal equity programs for business development, and/or tribal investments in the local economy.</li> <li>iv. Previous success identifying and managing multiple non-profit, for-profit, tribal, public sector and philanthropic partners toward successful project completion and positive outcome. For tribal applicants, this may include previous success in managing healthcare collaborations and partnerships; and/or with industries related to development of natural resources, e.g., oil, gas, coal, forestry, mining, fishing or agriculture;</li> <li>v. Previous success identifying and implementing evidence-based strategies, either independently or through partners; and</li> <li>vi. For tribal applicants, evidence of advancing tribal self-determination;</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Demonstrated ability to manage, share, and use data for evaluation and continuous improvement, or to engage and manage capacity for such purposes; and</li> <li>c. Up to 3 points under this factor will be awarded based on the extent of past experience in citizen engagement by the lead applicant working directly with or overseeing partners responsible for citizen engagement in similar efforts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Similarity between proposed Promise Zone activities and the previous efforts of the organization responsible for such engagement; and</li> <li>ii. Extent of impact of resident input on project design and execution for those previous efforts.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
10	<p>3. Capacity of partner(s) to implement Promise Zone strategy. In scoring for this factor, the agencies will consider the capacity of partners most relevant to each component of the strategy. For a. and b. below, up to 7.5 points will be based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Level of previous success of each partner in identifying and implementing evidence-based strategies similar to those for which they would be responsible in the Promise Zone, particularly to create jobs, increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, or reduce serious and violent crime within a specified geographic area;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Level of previous success in achieving the above intended outcomes; and</li> <li>c. Up to 2.5 points under this factor will be awarded based on the extent of past experience in resident engagement by the organization responsible for such engagement, including the factors listed below. If the initiative lead is taking direct responsibility for resident engagement activities, these points will be distributed to the others aspects of partner capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Similarity between proposed Promise Zone activities and the previous efforts of the organization responsible for such engagement; and</li> <li>ii. Extent of impact of resident input on project design and execution for those previous efforts.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
10	<p>4. Strength/extent of local government commitment (not contingent upon receipt of Promise Zone designation) to target local funds and locally-controlled funds from other sources toward evidence-based strategies to achieve Promise Zone outcomes within the Promise Zone.</p>
10	<p>5. Strength/extent of partnership commitment (not contingent upon receipt of Promise Zone designation) to coordinate work and investments through evidence-based strategies to achieve Promise Zone outcomes within the Promise Zone. Examples of such partnership commitments may include, as appropriate for the context of the proposed Promise Zone, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Strength/extent of local anchor institution commitment (e.g., hospitals, colleges/universities, major employers and business leaders, national and community foundations) to actions and investments likely to achieve Promise Zone outcomes;</li> <li>b. Strength/extent of commitment from city, county, or other local governmental entities, regional planning authorities, tribal government(s), and state officials, as appropriate, as demonstrated through their description of activities to be carried out in coordination with the Promise Zone;</li> <li>c. Strength/extent of commitment of local educational officials, criminal justice officials, economic development entities, workforce investment board, and community development advocates as demonstrated through their description of activities to be carried out in coordination with the Promise Zone;</li> <li>d. Strength/extent of involvement by citizens and community organizations in development of overall strategy and commitment to continued involvement; and</li> <li>e. Strength/extent of involvement of community-serving businesses and/or business associations; and</li> <li>f. Strength/extent of commitment to share data across partners within the Promise Zone for purposes of program improvement and accountability.</li> </ul>